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FOLLOWING REPEAT TOKYO 14744 ACTION SECSTATE INFO TAIPEI HONG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14744

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CH, US
SUBJECT: SCHLESINGER VIEWS ON CHINA

SUMMARY: COMMENTING ON TRIP TO CHINA, FORMER DEFENSE
SECRETARY SCHLESINGER ASSESSED CHINESE LEADERSHIP AS
CAPABLE AND PROBABLY COHESIVE, THOUGH FACED WITH
VERY DIFFICULT TASK OF GOVERNING HUGE COUNTRY WITH
STRONGLY DIVERGENT REGIONAL AND RACIAL INTERESTS.
PROPAGANDA STRESSING CHINESE SOLIDARITY WITH MINORITY
NATIONALITIES IS COVER FOR PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF
HAN EFFORTS TO CONTROL TRIBAL CULTURES. TIBET IS
NOTHING MORE THAN OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND OTHER SO-CALLED
AUTONOMOUS REGIONS LITTLE BETTER THAN CHINESE PROVINCES.
SINO-SOVIET BORDERS STILL SCENE OF CONTINUOUS LOW-LEVEL FRICTION.
PRC FOREIGN POLICY DOMINATED BY PRE-OCCUPATION
WITH USSR TO POINT WHERE CHINESE PROPOSED TO
SCHLESINGER ADOPTION OF DULLES-STYLE CONTAINMENT
STRATEGY. "MUNICH MENTALITY" FAVORING APPEASMENT
OF SOVIETS LARGEST OBSTACLE TO CONTAINMENT,
CHINESE BELIEVED. CHINESE VIEW JAPAN AS LEADING
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EXPONENT OF MUNICH MENTALITY. TAIWAN MENTIONED

ONLY ONCE AND CLEARLY AS SECONDARY ISSUE.
SCHLESINGER BELIEVED US POLICY SHOULD BE TO
ACKNOWLEDGE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTION TO PRC BUT DO
NOTHING MUCH ABOUT IT. SCHLESINGER HAS SOME
DOUBTS ABOUT CHINESE ABILITY CARRY THROUGH PEOPLES'
WAR STRATEGY BUT BELIEVES SOVIETS WOULD BE
ILL-ADVISED TO TEST THEIR VALIDITY. SOME CHINESE
ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES MAKE LITTLE SENSE ECONOMICALLY
BUT ARE EFFECTIVE AS MEANS OF MOBILIZING POPULATION
BEHIND REGIME. END OF SUMMARY.

1. AT BREAKFAST WITH AMBASSADOR AND IN SEPARATE
CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS DURING TOKYO STOPOVER SEPTEMBER 29-30,
FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER DISCUSSED IMPRESSIONS GAINED
DURING HIS VISIT TO CHINA. HIGHLIGHTS AS FOLLOWS:

2. LEADERSHIP

SCHLESINGER'S ASSESSMENT WAS THAT CHINESE
LEADERSHIP WOULD STICK TOGETHER. IT HAD NO CHOICE. BEFORE MAO'S
DEATH FACTIONAL DISPUTES COULD BE CARRIED ON BELOW MAO'S LEVEL.
NOW THAT HE WAS GONE, THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE BODY POLITIC
NEEDED EACH OTHER TO REINFORCE LEGITIMACY AND MAINTAIN
CONTROL. SCHLESINGER WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE QUALITY
OF THE CHINESE LEADERS HE MET, PARTICULARLY PARTY
VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING. IN CONTRAST TO MOST
OFFICIALS THAT HE MET, YEH SPENT 95 PERCENT OF HIS
TIME ON SUBSTANCE AND ONLY ABOUT 5 PERCENT ON
PROPAGANDA. SCHLESINGER ALSO GOT THE IMPRESSION
FROM HIS CONVERSATIONS, INCLUDING THAT WITH
HWA KUO-FENG, THAT LEADERSHIP WOULD OPERATE ON THE
BASIS OF COMPROMISE AND CONSENSUS RATHER THAN
CHARISMA. THE NEW CROP OF LEADERS WOULD TAKE THEIR
LEGITIMACY FROM THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION RATHER
THAN THE LONG MARCH, BUT MOST OF THEM WERE POLITICIANS
RATHER THAN IDEOLOGUES WHO WOULD SEEK TO USE MAO'S
PRECEPTS RATHER THAN BE GOVERNED BY THEM.

3. REGIONAL FRAGILITY:

SCHLESINGER CAME AWAY FROM CHINA WITH A SENSE OF
THE VAST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS REGIONS,
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THE PREOCCUPATION OF REGIONAL OFFICIALS WITH THEIR
OWN PROBLEMS RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE CENTER, AND
A FEEL FOR HOW DIFFICULT THE COUNTRY WAS TO GOVERN.
THE FURTHER AWAY ONE WENT FROM THE CENTER, THE LESS
LIP SERVICE WAS PAID TO CENTRAL PROPAGANDA THEMES.
SCHLESINGER BRIEF STAY IN CHENG TU GAVE HIM THE
IMPRESSION THAT SICHUAN WAS A SEPARATE COUNTRY,
RICH, CUT OFF, SELF-CENTERED. OFFICIALS WITH WHOM

SCHLESINGER SPOKE PREFACED THEIR REMARKS WITH RITUAL DENUNCIATIONS OF TENG HSIAO-PING DELIVERED IN MONOTONE, THEN TURNED IN MORE ANIMATED FASHION TO LOCAL IRRIGATION AND PRODUCTION PROBLEMS. JUDGING FROM THE HEAVY SECURITY THAT SURROUNDED HIS VISIT AND THE PERVASIVE PRESENCE OF MILITARY VEHICLES ALONG HIS ROUTE, SCHLESINGER DREW CONCLUSION THAT AUTHORITIES HAD PROBLEMS KEEPING ORDER IN SZECHWAN.

PRC PROPAGANDA ABOUT HAN SOLIDARITY WITH CHINA'S MINORITIES WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A FACADE FOR TROUBLED RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINESE AND TRIBAL GROUPS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. LHASA GAVE HIM THE IMPRESSION THAT TIBET WAS AN OCCUPIED AREA PURE AND SIMPLE. IN SINKIANG, MINORITIES SEEMED STRONGER. HE ARRIVED IN INING NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER AT 9 AM. LOCAL INHABITANTS KNEW THAT FOREIGNERS WERE GOING TO VISIT BUT SCHLESINGER'S IDENTITY WAS KEPT SECRET AND ONLY A FEW CURIOUS ONLOOKERS WERE STANDING BY, BY AFTERNOON, ACCORDING TO SCHLESINGER, WORD WAS OUT WHO WAS VISITING AND LARGE NUMBERS OF UIGHURS AND KAZAKH TRIBESMEN APPEARED ALONG THE ROADSIDES. SCHLESINGER INTERPRETED THEIR APPEARANCE AS A SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATION AIMED AT SHOWING DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM HAN RULERS. HIS CHINESE ESCORTS WERE VISIBLY NERVOUS AND APPARENTLY ANNOYED WHILE THIS WAS HAPPENING, AND IN FACT WERE SKITTISH AND SHORT-TEMPERED THROUGHOUT VISITS TO MINORITY AREAS. SCHLESINGER LEARNED WHILE IN INING THAT LIFE ALONG SINO-SOVIET BORDER NOT PEACEFUL BUT RATHER MARKED BY STEADY LOW-LEVEL HOSTILE ACTIVITY, INCLUDING SHELLING AND AGENT DROPS.

4. FOREIGN POLICY.

SCHLESINGER FOUND CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY THINKING PREOCCUPIED AS USUAL WITH SOVIET UNION. PREMIER HWA KUO-FENG SPENT MUCH OF HIS TWO AND A HALF CONFIDENTIAL

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HOURLY MEETING WITH SCHLESINGER DISCUSSING IN TERMS REMINISCENT OF JOHN FOSTER DULLES THE FORMATION OF AN ARC OF COUNTRIES AROUND USSR UNITED BY PARALLEL INTEREST IN CONTAINING SOVIET EXPANSION. HWA FELT THAT "MUNICH MENTALITY" WAS GREATEST THREAT TO THIS BROAD SCHEME AND THAT JAPAN UNDER MIKI LED LIST OF COUNTRIES INCLINED TO APPEASE SOVIET UNION. JAPANESE HANDLING OF HEGEMONY ISSUE IN PEACE-AND-FRIENDSHIP TREATY NEGOTIATIONS CITED AS EVIDENCE. FORMER FONMIN MIYAZAWA SINGLED OUT BY HWA FOR TURNING CHINESE SUPPORT ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE. WHEN SCHLESINGER DEFENDED MIYAZAWA, CITING RECENT TRIP TO NORTHERN TERRITORIES AS SIGN OF DEFIANCE TOWARDS SOVS, HWA DISMISSED MIYAZAWA VISIT COMPEMPTUOUSLY AS DOMESTIC POLITICAL

PLOY AND SAID, "IF MIYAZAWA WERE IN CHINA HE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ONE WHO HAD ALREADY SURRENDERED." SCHLESINGER COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT MIYAZAWA REMARKS TO SENATOR MANSFIELD PROBABLY AT ROOT OF CHINESE PIQUE TOWARD FORMER JAPANESE FOMIN. HWA TOLD SCHLESINGER THAT HE FAVORED INCREASE IN JAPANESE MILITARY SPENDING FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES AND HOPED US COULD INFLUENCE GOJ TO STEP UP EFFORTS. US-JAPAN RELATIONS SHOULD BE AHEAD OF US-CHINA RELATIONS ON AMERICAN LIST OF FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES, HWA SAID.

TAIWAN QUESTION CAME UP ONLY ONCE DURING ENTIRE VISIT AND THEN ONLY IN STANDARD FASHION. SCHLESINGER TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT MOST EFFECTIVE WAY FOR US TO HANDLE TAIWAN QUESTION WOULD BE TO ACKNOWLEDGE IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE TO CHINESE AND THEN DO NOTHING ABOUT IT. US COULD NOT HOPE TO GAIN CHINESE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT ISSUE IS SECONDARY OR COMMITMENT ON MODALITIES OF ULTIMATE SOLUTION. THERE IS NO QUESTION HOWEVER THAT US ROLE IN STRATEGIC BALANCE VIS-A-VIS SOVIETS IS KEY DETERMINENT OF WASHINGTON-PEKING RELATIONSHIP.

5. DEFENSE STRATEGY.

SCHLESINGER SAID HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER CHINA HAD THE CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT SUCCESSFULLY A PEOPLES' WAR STRATEGY AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. QUESTION NOT REALLY ANSWERABLE FOR SO MUCH DEPENDED ON HOW WELL INDOCTRINATION OF POPULATION WOULD STAND

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UP UNDER ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES IMPOSSIBLE TO SIMULATE. SOVS CERTAINLY CAPABLE DETACHING UNDERPOPULATED MINORITY AREAS OF CHINA-SINKIANG, ETC. SUCCESSFUL PEOPLES' WAR REQUIRED DENSE POPULATION, HE FELT. SCHLESINGER WONDERED IF FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT PRESENCE OF SOVIETS IN CHINA MIGHT NOT UNDERMINE ABILITY GOVERNMENT MOBILIZE POPULATION FOR SUCH A WAR? WHATEVER HIS DOUBTS, SCHLESINGER DID NOT RECOMMEND TESTING THEIR VALIDITY.

6. SCHLESINGER FOUND CHINESE LESS THAN PERFECTLY INFORMED ON SOVIET CAPABILITIES. THEY LABORING UNDER ASSUMPTION, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT SOVIET TANK WARFARE IN CHINA WOULD BE INHIBITED BY FUEL SHORTAGES. SCHLESINGER'S STATEMENT THAT SOVS WERE NET OIL EXPORTER CAME AS GENUINE SURPRISE EVEN TO YEH CHIEN-YING.

7. ECONOMICS.

SCHLESINGER FELT THAT MANY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES THE CHINESE ENGAGED IN DID NOT MAKE MUCH SENSE FROM A PURELY ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW. GROWING RICE NORTH OF THE YANGTZE IS ONE OF THESE AS ARE MANY OF THE WATER-CONSERVENCY PROJECTS HE SAW WHICH ARE USELESS MUCH OF THE YEAR DUE TO RAINFALL PATTERNS. MANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES HOW-

EVER, ARE IMPORTANT FROM THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW
AS MEANS OF ENERGIZING POPULATION AND PROVIDING PEOPLE WITH
SENSE OF PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATION.
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